1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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through each group of full brothers, until, when the last full brother is dead, and the son of the eldest is an adult, the family stock comes to him. Thus few men under forty (other than chiefs) have more than one wife. Of 3,000 tax-payers (presumed to be 18 years and over) in Selya, 34 per cent were bachelors, 37 per cent monogamists, and 29 per cent polygynists. Plural marriages breed wealth, for the polygynist is likely to command the labour of many sons as well as several wives, and in due course he expects to receive the marriage cattle of many daughters.

Social status turns primarily on age, sex, and the control and distribution of wealth. As we have seen, the position of a chief is hereditary, but kinship with a chief does not carry office, nor are the kinsmen of chiefs conspicuously wealthy. Every man in turn hopes to control the property attaching to the house into which he was born, and all who live long enough do so. But there is a delayed right of primogeniture, for the senior son of a senior son inherits the bulk of the family stock when it passes to his generation, and the eldest of each group of full brothers has a special claim to the cattle coming in from the marriages of his sisters.

Seniority, whether within the context of the lineage, or of the hierarchy of age-villages, is something respected in itself, but wealth carries authority and prestige only in so far as it is used generously, in hospitality: one man is great and distinguished (*nsiya*) because he feeds people, another of little account because he is poor or mean.

Women occupy a position very subordinate to men in Nyakyusa society. They play no part in public life, except in so far as the two great wives of a chief and the first wife of a village headman co-operate with their husbands in rituals; and in the relationship of husband and wife, as well as in that of father and daughter, a woman is expected to show obedience and respect. Her deference is expressed conventionally in her crouching to greet men (*vide* Plate IX), and in her use of the submissive *taa* ('Yes, my lord') when addressed by them. Having no great chiefs and little regard for rank, Nyakyusa men show no trace of subservience in their manner to each other, but they expect a meek compliance from all women. The only relationships with a male in which a woman may in some measure assert herself are those which she has with a brother, and with a brother's sons. Leader-

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decided by the old village headmen and chief in consultation, at the commencement of the 'coming out' ceremony. This moving aside of the old men is an essential part of the ceremony and occurs even when there is unoccupied land available. For example, at the 'coming out' of Mwaŋkuga, Mwaipopo's heir, the old men moved aside to make room for their sons, although there is a large area of unoccupied land in the chiefdom, which is slowly being colonized by Mwaipopo's men.

Although the main redistribution is at the 'coming out', later readjustments are common enough. If a particular men's village attracts many members, and these members become wealthy in wives and children, then it may be necessary for the old men to move aside a second time, to make yet more room for their sons. The senior headman of the side of the chiefdom concerned, in consultation with the chief and other village headmen, has the power to make equitable adjustments in the land holdings of the villages of his side. We watched one village, whose numbers had diminished, being moved to make more room for a junior one which had flourished. But so long as its members remain together, a village retains its name and identity, though its site may be moved more than once. 'A village', the Nyakyusa say, 'consists in men, not in land.'

Boundary disputes between villages of a chiefdom are not unusual. In the old days these often led to war. Nowadays they are taken before the Court, whence there is an appeal to the federal court, the District Officer, the Provincial Commissioner and thence to the High Court (cf. p. 137). One such case, which we observed, had dragged on for years because the chief concerned, who happened to be president of the Court, feared to give judgment lest he be bewitched by the village which lost the case (cf. Document p. 191).

The division of the land allotted to each village lies with the members of that village, under the leadership of their own headman. The village headman himself, and other prominent individuals in the group, get first choice of sites: a son does not have a prescriptive right to the building site and gardens of his father when the old men move aside for their sons. 'If you are prominent, and you like your father's old site, that's all right, the others agree; but if you are unimportant ("light"), no; one of the important men takes it; you have no power.' Certain building and garden

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sites are preferred to others, but the division of them at the 'coming out' does not appear to create much friction.

When the old men move they still maintain rights over what may be regarded as the major 'improvement' made on their old sites, that is, trees which they or others have planted. There are two species which were traditionally and still are of great value to the Nyakyusa, the bamboo and the *unyungati*. Bamboos are used for house-building, while the *unyungati* produces a fruit which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment. As has been shown in a previous essay[1] rights over these trees are maintained when individuals move from one village to another. Similarly, when a whole village moves, rights over bamboos are maintained, the former owner returning to cut them himself if he chooses. But the less valuable *unyungati* crop is left to the occupier. As one old man put it: 'We don't send our wives back to harvest the *imiyungati* trees lest the young men make love to them there.' Bamboos are felled by men. Further complications are now potentially created by the planting of coffee-trees, but we know of no case in which a 'coming out' has yet taken place in a chiefdom in which coffee has been extensively planted—the first coffee-planters were those living on mission land which is unaffected by the 'coming out' ceremony. Now that coffee planting is becoming general, however, the difficulties of moving whole villages will be much greater.

The only land which was traditionally excluded from the 'new deal' in each generation is the very scarce and valuable ground in the bottom of old volcanic craters. This land is owned by families, and is always claimed by a kinsman when the occupier dies or moves to another chiefdom. It may be that long ago the land in each particular crater was owned solely by members of some particular village, but now it is held by old families scattered all over the chiefdom in which it lies. Thus ordinary land, of which in the old days there was ample, was re-allotted in each generation, but the most valuable ground was passed down from father to son. We shall return to this point again in our last chapter.

As we have seen, movement of individuals from one village to another is very frequent. Normally land for building and gardens

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*, pp. 43–5. Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 1, 1938.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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shown by the way in which one fearing witchcraft, or accused of practising it, moves to another village. Sometimes he goes to another chiefdom, but often he only moves to another village in the same chiefdom—the chief himself may feel safe in one village of his country and not in another (*vide* Document, p. 190). It is on his fellow villagers that the good man depends for protection, and it is they whom the evil-doer fears.

Accusations within the lineage are rare. At first we were told that they did not occur at all; later a number of elderly informants agreed that this was not true—'the young men have misled you', they said; but careful inquiry only elicited three concrete cases[1] of witchcraft within the lineage (cf. table, p. 204). As we have seen, fellow members of a lineage normally live in different villages, and just how the idea of attacks by kinsmen is reconciled with the theory of village defence is not clear. Possibly it is argued that the witch attacks while visiting his kinsman, for it is in terms of visiting that the effect of 'the breath of men' on erring sons or younger brothers is explained. Where 'the breath of men' is thought to have affected someone of another village, it is argued that he or she came frequently to visit in the village of the attackers (cf. Document, p. 237), and the heir who neglects his elder brother's or father's funeral rites, and who is thought to suffer from 'the breath' of the deceased's justly indignant neighbours, is supposed to fall ill when he comes to their village to enter into his inheritance, or to make arrangements for the disposal of his property.

Even within the village it is the immediate neighbours that are primarily concerned in a case of suspected witchcraft. In the large villages of the plains the leader of a section, 'he of the heap of hot ashes', has the specific duty of protecting the herd which stands in the smoke of his fire against witches; and in smaller villages, also, a witchcraft case commonly begins with murmuring among a few next-door neighbours. Suspicion of witchcraft falls first on a member of the same village-section, then on a fellow villager; only rarely, and in peculiar circumstances, does it fall on a member of another village, and never on someone outside the chiefdom.

Differences of rank are relatively slight in Nyakyusa society

[1] A possible fourth is quoted on p. 246, but the exact relationship of the accused to the victim was not known to our informant.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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and scarcely affect accusations of practising witchcraft, save that the chief himself is never accused, though he is often thought to suffer from the witchcraft, or 'the breath', of his men. The commoners, 'the black people' (*abatitu*), are said to be the real witches, but a study of cases shows that junior brothers and sons of the chiefs are, in fact, sometimes accused. Village headmen may be accused just like the humblest of their followers, and men are accused at least as often as women (cf. table p. 198). Thus though witchcraft is held to be hereditary, and is particularly associated with menstrual blood, it is individual behaviour, not birth, or sex, that determines accusations.

What sort of behaviour, then, leads to accusations of witchcraft, and what sort of behaviour is thought to provoke attack by a witch, or bring upon one the chilling breath of men? We found that some quite specific teaching was given to Nyakyusa children on this point.

The type most usually described as a witch is the person whose character makes him (or her) to some extent isolated and unpopular—a proud man who treats his neighbours with disdain; a retiring man who always keeps silent in public; a glum wife, or one who fails to greet the other women she meets and to inquire after their children. Such people are treated by their neighbours with less courtesy and hospitality than the traditional ideals of good manners demand. 'Perhaps we do not summon him to drink beer, or to eat with us: and then when our cows fail to give milk we think, "doubtless it is he who is throttling them".'

One who fails to show sympathy with a neighbour in bereavement, neglecting to attend a funeral in the village, or one who does not try to persuade a neighbour to remain, when that neighbour is preparing to move for fear of witchcraft, is immediately suspect. The chief characteristic of witches is always said to be pride (*omatinge*), which includes a cold aloofness, as well as boastfulness and irascibility.

And what sort of people are thought to be attacked by witches? Informants agree that, though they act without public support, witches seldom act without provocation. It is argued on the one hand that they act from greed, and on the other that suppressed hatred drives them to attack (*vide supra*, pp. 92–4 and table, pp. 198–205). The Nyakyusa see no contradiction in this, for they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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431 between the groom's lineage and that of the bride during the puberty–marriage ritual.

431 613 Within a lineage, also, there is some circulation of property. A young man is provided with marriage-cattle by his father, or father's heir; a father kills a cow at his son's funeral, a son does likewise for his father; and if a son offends his father he begs pardon with a gift. A daughter is given a gift by her father at the close of the puberty ritual, and he or his heir kills a cow at her funeral.

431 621 Village neighbours are closely identified with the father, and feast on the bull of puberty and the offering provided by an erring son, and give gifts to a daughter when she reaches maturity.

431 Kinsmen and neighbours are expected to help provide food, and firewood on which to cook it, for the guests at a funeral or marriage or at a twin-birth ritual. On the first day of a funeral guests are fed on food provided by the bereaved household, on the following day on that provided by their kinsmen, and on the third day on that provided by the village neighbours. Before the marriage-cattle are brought for his daughter, a man asks his kinsmen and immediate neighbours to help him cook for 'the husbands'—not to ask for such help is unfriendly. Kinsmen and neighbours also bring gifts of millet at a funeral and after an abnormal birth, which is used for brewing the ritual beer.

(d) The symbolism of participation and exchange

431 602 What is implied by undergoing a ritual or offering gifts? Participation in a ritual implies close kinship. We see, in the rituals performed after death, or spearing, or binding with ropes, the unity of the group composed of parents, children, grandparents, and siblings; the acknowledgement of a closer link between some siblings than between others; a recognition that wives are of 'one blood' with their husbands; and a separation between kinsmen and affines who are of another blood. In the twin ritual the limits of recognized kinship are expressed by participation and in the death ritual they are expressed by attendance. Observance of the taboo of avoidance, like attendance at rituals, is taken as evidence of kinship.

554 602 The difference in the status of senior and junior wives, and of eldest and junior daughters and sons, also appears in the rituals at puberty and marriage and at death. The unity between living and dead agnatic kin and, in a lesser degree, mother's kin, is ex-

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pressed again and again in the pagan rituals. The Christian withdrawal from them implies a partial break with the closed circle of kin, a movement from the nexus of kinship to that of association, from the kinship group to the congregation of believers.

The passage of cattle at marriage implies first the establishment of a bond of kinship with the wife for whom they are given. 'Kinship is cattle' (*ubukamu syo ngombe*) and a woman for whom cattle have not been given is never kin (*unkamu*) to her husband.

The passage of marriage-cattle determines the legal position of the children borne by the woman for whom they have been given. Whoever has given the cattle controls the children; and, if no cattle have passed, the girl's father (or brother) can claim them. If the woman for whom cattle have been given leaves the lineage which gave them, the cattle (traditionally all of them, together with their progeny) must then be returned, even though her original husband is dead; and when she dies she should be replaced. Kinship between lineages once linked by marriage should ideally be permanent, and the link is reasserted in the ritual in which, when a woman dies, her brother goes to cut down the bananas at her husband's homestead and to seize her children, and has to be persuaded with a gift to desist. The identification made between women and cattle exchanged is suggested in the phrase conventionally used when no girl is available to take the place of a dead wife and a cow is offered in her place 'for drawing water with'.

The killing of cattle at a funeral, and the burial of cloths and other goods, is an expression of the idea that the dead take wealth with them. When a man requires cattle to pay compensation for some wrong committed and has not sufficient stock to do so, he turns for help to his affines, his sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and so, when he dies, and is in need of cattle, it is felt appropriate that they should help him.

But the gifts offered at rituals have many other implications. Men take cattle and cloths to a funeral '*ukuti ndage*'—to express sympathy—and gifts are given to a bride also '*ukuti ndage*', which then implies congratulation rather than condolence. And gifts are used when begging pardon—a son who has sinned against his father first sends a hen and later offers a bull; and a daughter-in-law who has looked at her father-in-law or sworn at her mother-in-law must offer beer or a bull. Lastly, they are used in lifting a ban, putting an end to an avoidance. When a girl's father and his

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613 referred to is not necessarily an ancestor of those who speak of him. In the rituals the participants look towards the direction from which their ancestors came, and the details vary both with the cultural area and with the particular lineage, but similarity in ritual observance is no ground for claiming kinship. The one recognized bond is common participation—attending one another's funerals and observing the rules of avoidance.

The segmentation of lineages is by houses. Ties between full siblings are closer than those between half-siblings and this is immediately apparent in the attendance at, and participation in rituals, as the genealogy of Mwakobela (Table (a)) shows. Full siblings, particularly successive and linked siblings, are closely identified. The most important link between men or women is inheritance. The heir takes the name and social position of the deceased, succeeding to his or her rights and obligations, and observing the same avoidances. 'A shade is resurrected in the body of his child.' The heir is a junior[1] man or woman of the lineage, preferably a full brother or sister, but possibly a half-brother or sister, or parallel cousin, or a son, or brother's son, or brother's daughter.

613 601 When the heir is a son, or brother's son or daughter, the separation so strictly maintained between generations is bridged for that individual only; he or she changes generation and a man is treated by his former comrades as a 'father' and referred to by his wives as 'father-in-law', even though they are still his wives and live with him.

The identification of alternate generations is expressed in calling grandchildren ('the comrades of the shades') to eat the sacrificial meat or fish, or take the first sip of beer, as well as in the absence of taboos between affines of such alternate generations. A woman does *not* avoid her husband's grandfather. Thus, though the lineage is treated in some respects as a unit, one man (or woman) of it being able to replace another and override the distinction between successive generations, the unity is not pushed as far as among many other peoples, such as the Pondo, where the form of behaviour appropriate to a father-in-law applies to *all* senior members of his lineage irrespective of generation.

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613 ● 534 Differences in status within the lineage are clearly shown in the rituals. In their observance seniors precede juniors, men precede

[1] If there is no junior full brother, a senior full brother may inherit provided that he has not previously inherited from his father and so become 'father'.

[Category 11b, facing p. 270. – Analyst]

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women, daughters of the lineage precede wives. Seniority, of course, does not depend solely on age, and we once saw a little boy precede his father in the performance of a ritual for his grandmother, with whose generation he was identified. The relative status of husband and wife is expressed in the taboo on a woman [562] 'overstepping' her husband physically or metaphorically, and 'overstepping' is symbolized (oddly to a Christian) by the sign of a cross. The precedence of the chief wife is very marked. In commoner families she alone washes with her husband using the *ikipiki* medicine, and he performs the death ritual for her only. A chief may do this for two wives. In Selya a father washes in the puberty ritual with his senior daughter, and among the Kukwe a woman washes with her daughter or eldest son's first wife. 'To wash is to admit that I have lived, and borne a child, and grown up.'

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All the rituals celebrate a change in status, and danger lies in not recognizing or admitting the change, in clinging to the past. This is most obvious in the death ritual, which is directed to the separation of the living and the dead. The mourners have the corpse 'on their bodies', they may not separate themselves from him by washing till the appropriate moment, and they share their food and *ikipiki* medicine with the shade, thereby recognizing him as a kinsman; but in due course they drive him off: 'You were our kinsman before but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' 'You are no relative of ours.' 'We are not corpses.' And at the same time they bring him back transformed, as a beneficent spirit in the home. The pattern is a common one in Bantu Africa: the Nyakyusa peculiarity is (1) the speed with which the transformation is achieved (commonly the 'bringing back' of the spirit is delayed a year, whereas the Nyakyusa may delay only a month); and (2) *the close correspondence between the change in status of the dead* and the change in status of the older generation, who 'move aside' at the 'coming out'. Each generation has its day and must give place to the next.

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All through the rituals the dominance of the agnatic lineage is evident, but it does not exclude the recognition of kinship in the female line. Daughters' children *must* perform the ritual at death, twin birth, spearing, and binding with ropes, for their grandparents, while sons' sisters' children, and father's sisters' sons, may do so also. What is clear from the genealogies is that kinship links in the female line are not traced as far as in the male line and,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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sons, between whom economic and religious bonds were strong, might be liable to isolate themselves, but could not do so when each brother and son lived in a different village. As among the northern Nguni and Tswana, who were organized in age regiments,[1] the principle of generation balanced the lineage principle, each holding the other in check.

Every society values co-operation: 'mutual aid' of one sort or another is a condition of social survival. The Nyakyusa rituals of kinship constantly reaffirm the mutual dependence of members of a lineage. They are 'members of one another' by virtue of their common blood, and what injures one may injure all. This is very clearly expressed in the rituals of death, twin birth, spearing, rotting the ropes, and protection against sorcery. The desire for health and plenty is the lever used to compel co-operation.

The elementary family of parents and children exists in every society of which we have evidence and may be taken as an institution necessary to survival, biological and social, though its form varies. In the death, and puberty, and birth rituals the close character of the bonds between parents and children, between siblings, and between spouses, is expressed; and the polygynous form of the Nyakyusa family, the closer bonds between a man and his first wife and those of the same 'house', and the identification of alternate generations, are also manifested. Thus the importance of the primary ties of parents and children, and of the 'house' within the polygynous family, is enhanced.

Differences in status exist in every society and must do so since leadership is necessary. Individuals move from one position to another during the course of their lives, and all societies celebrate such changes, thereby compelling public acceptance of them, and impressing on the individuals concerned their new duties and responsibilities. These are expressed very pointedly in the Nyakyusa admonition to a bride, or widow, or the mother of twins; in the greeting accorded to the heir to the father of a family; and in the oration to the shade. The rituals are a symbolic weaning from childhood, from the bride's father's lineage, from a former marriage, or from deceased parents, and compel acceptance of a new position; clinging to the old spells madness and death. The conception of being 'born again' and making a new start, is directly

[1] Among the Pedi it was taboo for full brothers to be initiated into the same regiment. G. M. Pitje, 'Traditional systems of male education among the Pedi', *African Studies*, 9 (1950), p. 109.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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• 539 linked to the physiological cycle of individuals and their close kin, and cannot be detached from it as in Christianity.

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626 Law is a condition of social survival; no society can exist without it; and in so far as religion helps to maintain law and order it fulfils a necessary social function. Among the Nyakyusa (and perhaps in all societies) order is maintained partly by fear of supernatural sanctions. The rituals we have described both enhance fear and relieve it. They harness fear to social ends.

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771 The preceding chapters are full of the pagan fear of death, menstruation, childbirth, and shedding blood. The rituals express the fear and teach men what they must do to be saved. They teach them to co-operate with their kinsmen and to follow traditional custom, for in that alone does salvation lie. The fear of madness or sterility compels each generation to follow traditional custom as ordained for them by the heroes: thus is the dependence of man upon his society instilled. The death ritual illustrates this most dramatically. In every society men must overcome death emotionally, they must turn to life. In the death ritual the mourners are distraught, terrified; they express their grief and put it behind them; their relatives and neighbours gather round them, share their sorrow, and help them to overcome it. The dead is replaced. Death is associated with fecundity and so made tolerable. It is no accident that the Nyakyusa interpret all the rituals, and especially the death ritual, as a protection against going mad, against the disintegration of the personality. And safety is assured to the living by following minutely the traditions of their lineage.

[99] That the nature of men's fears is culturally determined is clear from the Nyakyusa evidence, for Christians and pagans alike are agreed that 'the Christians fear much less' than do pagans, and the Christians do in fact ignore taboos which the pagans feel to be binding. But the rituals do not create fear out of nothing. All the situations in which they are performed—birth and death, marriage, and misfortune—are situations of emotional tension in all societies. The rituals heighten the emotions and canalize them. They both teach men to feel, and teach them what it is proper to feel.

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783 Many writers have shown us that the conception of sacred includes both the idea of holiness and of pollution;[1] that the awful, the fearful, may be conceived both as pure and as filthy. In

[1] See particularly W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889), pp. 152, 446–54 (1914 ed.); R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923).

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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Men
of social position are known by the number of *manyeta* 291
(body rings worn on the waist) which they wear: [301
one for a man or woman just "above the common"; 554]
six or seven for a man of high standing. A few women
have begun, to their own great discomfort, to wear
the immense coils of brass or iron on wrists or ankles
which are so popular among other tribes.

Clothes, says an acknowledged authority on the 291
subject, make the man. Not among the Konde. 643
Chungu is a great chief, but his greatness does not 554
depend on what he wears, although there are occa-
sions when he dresses more carefully than at other
times. This almost naked man is regarded with a
reverence greater than is granted to any but a very
few Europeans, and out of all recognition greater
than is felt for the native who swaggers about in
boots and helmet and white man's clothes. The
respect which is accorded to a European depends
to-day (though it did not in the past) upon his personal
character, his control of resources, the authority which
has been bestowed upon him by others. But Chungu,
with hundreds of other chiefs throughout Bantu
Africa, has a respect which is gained in a totally
different fashion. He is in close touch with unseen
powers. His prayers have a compelling power, his
benediction is priestly, his curse of fearful validity.
He is a channel through which may come weal or
woe upon the land; and hence his authority depends
in no degree upon such an accident as dress.

By almost all who know them the Konde are re- 461
garded as lazy. And to the bustling, and perhaps

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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423 622 In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

166 423 622 When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief, as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased. [427] As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

622 551 [585] Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant [624] to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *busongo* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This [177] traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

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paid out of the Native Treasury from the taxes, rarely exceeds 10/- a month it may be doubted whether modern conditions are not in this, as in other respects, impoverishing the Nyakyusa chiefs.

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A chief had the right traditionally to evict any man he pleased if he desired his site for his own personal use, giving him another in exchange. But this right is no longer effective: "It is now at an end," as a chief's kinsman told me, "for the man evicted will go to Tukuyu (the administrative capital of the district) and complain that his chief is turning him out of his home without good cause." It is however still perfectly possible for a chief to take any *unoccupied* site he pleases without reference to the local villagers. He may take it for himself or he may give it to a kinsman, and no objection to such an action on his part is ever raised. It is only if he gives it to an ordinary commoner that his people will criticize him.

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Land once held by the kinsman of a chief at the latter's gift is more secure to him than any land can be which is granted in the ordinary way by a great-commoner; for no one but the chief himself can ever finally take it from him. If he moves and the villagers wish to give the site to a newcomer then they must either send a message after him and ask his permission to do so or else get explicit permission from the chief, if the newcomer's title is to be in any way secure.

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A case within my own knowledge well illustrates these points: Mwakobela, half-brother of chief Mwaipopo, had been given land in the village of Ipoma by Mwaipopo himself. Subsequently he had moved to Kibonde, a minor chiefdom under the jurisdiction of Mwaipopo, and had spent many years there; and when I first met him he was living there still. But then he fell sick and, suspecting witchcraft, decided to return to Ipoma, only to find his old building-site occupied. For the great-commoner of Ipoma, thinking he had moved for good, had given it to a newcomer.

This grant of land to the newcomer had been irregular in more ways than one: firstly Mwakobela's permission had not been asked, secondly no reference at all had apparently been made to Mwaipopo, who subsequently denied any part in the grant and, thirdly, the great-commoner had not even consulted his fellow villagers; if he had done so they would, so one of them told me in discussing the case, have reminded him of the necessity of first asking Mwakobela's permission. The newcomer however had been given the site unconditionally and when Mwakobela reclaimed it he refused to move; but the rights of Mwakobela were unquestionable and he had no difficulty at all in getting him evicted.

I went to visit Mwakobela a few weeks after he had taken possession of the site and he told me about the eviction: "I approached the great-commoner and asked him who had given Mwangesiye (the newcomer)

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sheep over it; if it still refused they would kill a cow; and if it still refused then they would kill a human being, the child of a commoner.

Then there was *Mulima*, a porous piece of iron "like a mouth organ," which the Kyungu used to make rain. If he held it up out of doors with its holes clear, so that he could see right through them, then it would be fine, but if he stopped up the holes and then held it up out of doors the sky would at once become overcast and rain would fall. And there were his zebra tails set in horn handles, with medicine in the handles, which his people carried to war to give them victory; and his spear *Kawisa*, and so on.

There is no sharp distinction in the pagan religion of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa between its magical and its theistic elements. Sometimes the magical, sometimes the theistic predominates, but often they are inextricably mixed. In the prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors magic enters at every turn: particular people, a particular place, particular materials and gestures, particular words are held to be essential to their success. Nor are the more permanent and obvious magical objects always free from divine associations. When we asked, for example, why the drum *Muenekelwa* had needed occasional human sacrifices to make it work properly we got this answer: "It was because their god[1] had given this drum to the Kyungu saying: 'I alone am war, there is none other war save me.' It (the human sacrifice) was like a prayer. The refusal of *Muenekelwa* to sound was like the prophetic fit that falls on people (from the spirits) commanding sacrifice (in the groves)." Or, again, it is clear from our evidence that the living Kyungu's power of causing a drought was believed to arise both from his relationship to the spirits and from his possession and use of *Mulima* together. His magical body and possessions, being inherited from his predecessors, were part of his relationship to them.

Now one of the material facts which had magical significance in Ngonde was that of general social status. The magical powers of the Kyungu not only contributed to the general political authority of Mbande but were, in part, magically derived from it. Only the greatest in the land could possess the greatest magic without endangering his life. There were, for example, a number of chiefs' medicines (*ifingila*), and if a chief used a medicine which was above his status then it was believed that, on meeting the Kyungu or some great chief, to whose

[1] The phrase "their god" (*Kyala pesabe*) is normally used by pagans nowadays to mean the ancestral spirits, or some one among them. The term *Kyala*, which originally referred only to one of the most influential Nyakyusa spirits, has now been identified either with the Christian God or with divinity in general throughout all this area.

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789 status it rightly belonged, he would at once fall down dead. And many stories are still told of such happenings in the past.

554 643 And besides this there was the fact that the Kyungu, being the richest man in Ngonde and in the most intimate contact with the ivory traders, could secure medicines from a distance, which had a greater reputation than local ones.

789 771 554 But, as in the theistic aspect of the religion of Ngonde there was considerable local and family autonomy, so also was there in the magical aspect; and here there was individual autonomy also. Lesser rulers had lesser magic than Mbande, but still it was magic. Ordinary chiefs, for instance, had magically filled zebra tails which gave their people military success. And every individual could go to a doctor and exchange a little of his surplus food for magic. Success in love and hunting, in warfare and legal disputes, good crops and good health—all alike, it was believed, magic could give.

(c). *THE ELEMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.*

754 622 624 Both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa it was believed that certain commoners had snakes in their stomachs which gave them the power of witchcraft (*uwalosi* or *uwangu*[1]) and among those who had this power were the great-commoners of every chiefdom. Normally a ruling chief was spiritually protected by his great-commoners from the malicious attacks of other witches, but, if he did wrong, then the great-commoners, so it was held, would cease to protect him and join in the attack.

Now in many circumstances the great-commoners' power of witchcraft and the power of the chief's dead predecessors were believed to act together. The anger of witches and that of the ancestors were sharply distinguished in theory, but in practice they often coincided. The great-commoners, for example, not only had the power of bewitching their chief but also of appealing to his predecessors to punish him for wrong-doing; and on particular occasions they were often believed to do both at once.[2] And the nobles of Ngonde had similar powers in relation to the Kyungu.[3]

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[1] *Uwalosi* is normally used when the act of witchcraft is disapproved of and *uwangu* when it is approved of by the speaker.

[2] A point of considerable theoretical interest is raised by the repeated statements of our best informant on these matters that it was because they were witches that the great-commoners had this power of influencing the chief's ancestors, that they went to the chief's ancestors in their capacity of witches and in the manner of witchcraft (i.e. by means of the snakes in their stomachs). But our evidence on this point is not yet conclusive.

[3] So we were told when we put the question; but it was never volunteered. It was the belief which the nobles of Ngonde had over the Kyungu in consequence of his magical flesh which was the more emphasized.

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and say 'This is the new Kyungu.' And when they make obeisance to Kyungu all the rest, both the chiefs and nobles, fall to the ground, but Kalonga alone remains seated, for he is the senior of the whole line."

In the succession to the great chiefdoms there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines, that of Ngelenge and that of Ngana. When a great chief of Ngelenge died, the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu, both to the funeral and, later, to assist in the selection of a successor. "With the great chiefs of Ngelenge it is we, the nobles of Ngonde, who have always caught their successors. We catch Kalonga, Mwakasungula Mwambelo, Katamba (or Mwenitete) and Mvambungu.[1] But we have never gone to catch the successors of the lesser chiefs, nor used we to catch the chiefs of Ngana either, for they are of the female line.... When a great chief (of Ngelenge) has died we go and consult secretly with the great-commoners and then, if one of the dead man's immediate heirs is suitable we catch him, but if not we may pass them over and take someone else who is, it maybe, quite junior in that house but who entertains his people generously. Him we hit with a dry stick saying, we have you, you are M—(title of the great chief) now! .... The chosen man we set upon a stool; this is the ancient custom. We always (used to) select mature men for these positions, not just youths[2]."

"The great titles among the Ngana chiefs" we were told "are five: Mwenengubwe, Mwafongo, Kalambo, Kilupula and Mwabulambo. In the old days the nobles of Ngonde did not go to catch them, because they were only the female line; they would summon their great-commoners to Mbande and enquire who was to succeed and, when they had discussed it with them, tell them to go and catch the selected man to be the new chief. Then the great-commoners would return and discuss it with the other four great chiefs of Ngana, after which they would catch the chosen man."

The qualities looked for both in a Kyungu and a great chief were the same, with one exception: he had to be "a ruling chief.... elderly man....one who was respectful in his manner to the leading commoners.....a wise chief who knew how to feed his people." The emphasis on generosity in entertainment is most striking, every informant stresses it above all other qualities. Generosity and the possesion of abundance of food were the supreme traditional marks of a chief both in Ngonde, among the Nyakusa and in many other parts of Africa as

[1] The house of Mwambungu was originally a junior branch of that of Katamba.
[2] Mwasumbuka and Kyabinga. Other informants make it clear that not only the nobles of Ngonde but the territorial nobles of the plain also participate in the selection of these great chiefs.

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643 622 554 well. The one additional qualification of a great chief was bravery in war; the Kyungus never fought and so in their case bravery was less important.

565 The succession of the nobles of Ngonde, of the territorial nobles of the plain and of the territorial nobles of the hills was similar to that of the great chiefs: the nobles of Ngonde themselves went and discussed with the leading men of the dead noble which member of his family to appoint in his place; and the immediate heirs were passed over if unsuitable.[1] But in the case of the territorial nobles the successor of the original noble sponsor or protégé of that family also took part in the discussions. It will be remembered that there was an, at least ceremonial, hierarchy among the territorial nobles, depending upon the priority of their arrival in Ngonde and the fact that a later arrival was always introduced at Mbande by some established noble and given land near him. And the relationship then established between the fiefs continued to manifest itself at every subsequent succession.

"Mwenelupembe was a Nyika but then he came here to Ngonde and the Kyungu gave him land by the lake. Then later Mwalugali came from Mwela, and Mwenelupembe told the Kyungu that he had come; whereupon the Kyungu sent the nobles of Ngonde with Mwenelupembe to give him land. And still, when a Mwalugali dies it is Mwenelupembe and the nobles of Ngonde who discuss with his men the choice of a successor. Then, still later, Kasembe came to Mwalugali who told Mwenelupembe, who told the Kyungu. Kasembe came without men; he came from Mwela like Mwalugali but was not a kinsman of his. So the Kyungu said that Kasembe should build with Mwalugali. Then last of all came Songwe with some of his relatives, to Mwalugali. Now Songwe was a kinsman of Kasembe's. Mwalugali told Mwenelupembe who, in his turn, told the Kyungu.——And the Kyungu decided that as Songwe and Kasembe were kinsmen they should be given land together, but a little apart from Mwalugali. And still they are associated, all four, and when one of them dies the other three come to the funeral and together send the message to the Kyungu. And the three of them consult with the nobles of Ngonde about the choice of a successor; they, the nobles of Ngonde and the relatives of the dead noble consult together,

622 The succession to the ordinary local chiefdoms of Ngonde was, like

[1] Later in their conversation it was made clear, however, that, in the case of the more distant territorial nobles, both in the plain to the north and in the hills to the west, it was only to the successors of the most important ones that the nobles of Ngonde went in person. When a lesser noble died then the Kyungu would send to the great chief who was nearest (to Kihapula in the west and to Kalambo in the north), asking him to send men of his own to "catch" the successor.

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that to the independent chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa, tied up with the custom of the "coming out" (*wuusoka*). In both areas the two senior sons of the two great wives of each ruling chief were publicly "brought out" about a generation after the "coming out" of their father; and from that time forwards the old chief went into semi-retirement while they divided his country between them. If it was a big country both of them would very likely be prosperous rulers; if it was not then one of them—the most generous rather than the senior—would probably in time attract the bulk of the people to him, leaving his half-brother little but the name of a chief.

Now both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa there was a certain tendency for other sons of an old chief, besides the two senior who were formally "brought out," to collect a few men round them and set up chiefdoms of their own. But it was in Ngonde that this tendency was most marked. And so today the chiefdoms of Ngonde are smaller than those of the Nyakyusa, for they have been far more split up. The reason for this difference appears to have lain in the very great prestige of Mbande, and so of all kinsmen of the Kyungu. There is a saying current in Ngonde: "Every son of the Kyungu is a chief." But no such saying is current among the Nyakyusa. And thus it has happened that often in Ngonde the men of an old chief have been divided up among four or five sons, not among two only; and the most successful of these four or five has not always been one of the two senior. If a junior son was a more generous feaster of men than his seniors he would die a greater chief than they, for many of their followers would leave them and join him. So we see that the formal passing over of a mean or poverty-stricken chief in favour of a richer or more generous junior, in the selection of the great chiefs, was but an extension of a principle which already worked less formally among the little local chiefs themselves.

And, further, it must be emphasized that the principles of succession to high office in Ngonde and the principles by which property is inherited there were, and still are, wholly distinct. When the immediate heir of a Kyungu or a great chief is passed over in the succession he does not thereby lose his inheritance. The wives and property of the dead man are indisputably his. Full-brothers are the first heirs and after them either sons or half-brothers, in accordance with different circumstances; while a sister's son can only inherit if all near patrilineal kinsmen are either still in their infancy or already dead.

The traditional laws of succession to the Kyungushipp, the great chiefdoms and the fiefs of Ngonde thus present the student with a most interesting balance between different principles: heredity was modified

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643 622 554 by election; the election was made by the central power and the leaders of the local populations in agreement; mature wisdom, courtesy and generosity in the use of wealth were all essential qualifications for office. In arranging the succession to the local chiefdoms, on the other hand, the central power of Mbande took no active part. All these chiefs were related to the Kyungu, who was informed of every "coming out" as a matter of form, but that was all. In the case of these local chiefs the hereditary principles were modified only by popular choice, acting gradually over a number of years.

(c) *COMMON LAW.*

692 We must beware of letting our civilized preconceptions blind us to the fact that, though some common law must be maintained in every society, it is not always necessary for it to be maintained by a central political authority. In the primitive world of Ngonde Mbande played little or no direct part in the maintenance of common law; the great chiefs, the local chiefs, the territorial nobles, the great-commoners of the villages played a larger part; but even they usually left whole areas of law untouched to be enforced by the common people among themselves. The laws of marriage for example, seem to have been normally enforced by the two families of each married couple concerned, with the advice and assistance of their neighbours.

In a primitive society a man is far more helplessly dependent upon his relatives, friends and neighbours than he is in our own. He cannot normally escape them, for his world is so small. And this fact enables them often to constrain him effectively without calling in the aid of any constituted political authority whatever. Moreover even when it is necessary to call in the aid of political authorities it is often sufficient to call in those that have a local jurisdiction only. Centralized judicial institutions, covering wide areas, are rare in primitive conditions, because widely extensive social relations are rare also. The modern insistence upon the judicial functions of paramount chiefs in Africa is necessitated by the magnitude and complexity of the modern civilised world, in which law *can* only be maintained by central authorities; but, in many areas at least, this insistence is something new. That many African paramount chiefs had some judicial functions in former times is, of course, a fact, but those functions were often less extensive than they are to-day.

In Ngonde, however, there was traditionally no central court at all in which ordinary men could either bring cases direct or appeal from the decisions of their local authorities. At Mbande only cases of treason and insubordination against the Kyungu or the great chiefs were dealt

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178 643 Magemo to Mwakabanga no Kyungu has ever been succeeded by his own immediate heir; the choice of Peter as successor to Mwangalaba was unique, for he was his full brother and the heir to his property, but then Peter's ability and personal wealth were unique also. And in the case of the great chiefs and the nobles also the principle of election is still followed.

178 554 643 The grounds of election have slightly altered. Generosity and wealth are still important, but "wisdom in European ways" is now more looked for than maturity, and shortly before our visit a fairly young man was chosen as Mwakasungula. Bravery in war, of course, no longer matters.

178 565 622 The Administration have so far made little use of any great chiefs except the three who are now "Sub-chiefs;" but the others (the "Important Headmen") could be made into effective local rulers, if their salaries were raised. The ordinary chiefs and nobles (the "Village Headmen") are too numerous and have too few subjects to be very effective links in the chain of modern authority. But many of the great chiefs command the respect of considerable numbers. Moreover the fact that they are already being elected for their "wisdom in European ways" suggests that they will prove competent to deal with modern problems.

The traditional secular procedure of election is still followed, with some exceptions: the nobles of Ngonde are now sent by the Kyungu to participate in the "catching" of the great chiefs of Ngana[1] on the spot; the District Commissioner is informed of the result of every election; while the Kyungu himself, no longer secluded, takes a bigger share in making the choices than his predecessors very well could. And many of the religious elements of the traditional procedure, such as the setting of a new Kyungu on the iron stool *Kipumbi*, have fallen out of use.

The sending by Peter of the nobles of Ngonde to catch the chiefs of Ngana is a sign of the present centralization of power in his hands under Government. When we asked why the old custom had been changed we were told that it was "because now everything is under the control of Government and comes to the Kyungu."

The gradual ousting by chiefs of the few ruling territorial nobles who still remain in the plain has continued in modern times, but the novel conditions have complicated the process and seem to be checking it. A recent quarrel between Kajuni and Mwenelupembe illustrates this. The head of the house of Kajuni, which is a junior branch of the

[1] I think this is also true of the less important territorial nobles of the hills, but am not sure.

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583 takes place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[4] and her husband's friends from his village[4] participate. If a girl
[584] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*ukukwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[4] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position
583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[4] Vide index "The Age Village".
[p. 264, col. 1b — Age village]

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636 177 578 *supra*). Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have "come out" and when they die their full-brothers still dispute the position with the sons because of the salary involved. Such a situation could not have arisen before 1926, for then there was no comparable issue between them.

636 622 177 And the introduction of salaries has also had a most profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who "come out" together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies the Government recognises the first son alone as chief and pays the whole salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided: the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while to the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief.

554 622 As the prestige and authority of a father in his family, or of a man among his neighbours, is closely connected with his wealth on the one hand, and with his believed religious powers on the other, so also the status of a chief among his people. He has more cows, more wives, more food than other men; he is spiritually responsible for the fertility of the land, the women and the cattle of his chiefdom. But he is no autocrat, and all his public functions require for their exercise the co-operation of his great commoners.

622 595 Polygyny is, above all, the mark of a chief. Few commoners have more than five or six wives, but a chief frequently marries fifteen, thirty, fifty or even more; his wives weed and plant the fields which their unmarried sons hoe, and there is plenty of food for guests. Chiefs themselves hoe when they have time, and often they employ a poor man to hoe for them as well, rewarding him after a year or two with a cow. It is not [637] possible for one man to satisfy so many women sexually, and it is generally said that every chief's wife, save the five or six who are his favourites, has a lover. But intrigues must be carried on with care, for their discovery means a great public scandal.

The extent of a chief's polygyny is conditioned by his control of cattle, and his income in cattle is derived mainly from inheritance and the

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476 all, hunting is organized like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

471 Every chief has a title of ownership (*ubwene nakya*) to the land of his
622 chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

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692 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

● 554
629 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

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754 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

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643 784 round him and sit at home in the middle in the sun. . . . All the old chiefs inspired fear (*kupala*). It used to be taboo to walk near the house of a chief and approach him unless taken by a village headman . . . nowadays men walk about and enter his home and [177] even steal his food.'[1] The power came partly from his position as the living Lwembe, and partly from the medicines with which he was treated, especially the terrible *ifegila*.

643 [554] The 'divine king' who came as a conqueror bringing iron is also associated with victory in battle. Still today a brave fighter is saluted as 'Lwembe', and an iron spear is one of the emblems of chieftainship.

643 793 782 The Lwembe was himself a priest—he is often referred to as *sepaga*—but he was assisted by commoners. There is a hereditary keeper of the grove of Lubaga named Kimoule who is the descendant of that Kimoule the commoner who fled from BuKinga with Lwembe. It is he who conducts the sacrifices, who daubs the participants with medicines before they enter, and who protects the groves. 'If by mistake the grove was a little burnt then the people here paid a beast to Kimoule, it was his to eat as he liked.' Others of the priests say that Lwembe found their ancestors at Lubaga; they are 'owners of the soil' there, and one of them, Mwaseni, could give us the names of six generations of ancestors who had been priests of Lubaga before him. But the bulk of the commoner priests are not hereditary at all, they are surviving village headmen (or their heirs) of the most recently dead Lwembe.

The success of the sacrifices at Lubaga was held to depend upon the proper co-operation of chiefs and priests: first, on the Lwembe himself (the shortage of food among the Kinga, and of milk among the Nyakyusa, while we were there, was attributed by Kasitile to the fact that there was no living Lwembe); secondly on the commoner priests of Lubaga; thirdly on the commoner Kinga priests; fourthly on Kasitile (86) and certain other priests of Selya; and fifthly on the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and the Kinga who provided the offerings. 'Can a priest celebrate alone?' said Kasitile. 'No, the ritual depends on the chiefs.' The celebrations thus linked together chiefs and people, as well as Kinga and Nyakyusa, and numerous different Nyakyusa chiefdoms. The hereditary Kinga priests live in the country of the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa and

[1] This is inconsistent with Kasitile's statements quoted above. The general opinion was that chiefs were more powerful than formerly, but the living Lwembe less so.

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system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

(f) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobokosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

These chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an office and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1953 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the grandson, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[1] J. Gluckman, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Lunguda*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 12–13; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 100; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 92; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 209; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 9.

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CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

We turn now from the description of rituals to a personal document, an account of the illness of Kasitile (86), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the persistent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (*ukunena*) and not leaving anger to smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for *is sino sweius*.

The *dramatis personae* are:

KASITILE (86) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya
JANE his *senior* and favourite wife
JANE'S YOUNGER SISTER and co-wife
KELELELE a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile
MWALIPOPO (116) the chief and *senior* kinsman of Kasitile
MWAKYONDE (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
KINGA *priests* (*i.e.* Kikungubeja Nyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, *vide* pp. 29-34)
NGULUVO
NJOBOKISA
KIMOOTA
Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove, *vide* pp. 74-7, 84-5
MWAKAKINDA THE ELDER a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
MWAKAKINDA THE YOUNGER (Mwanilangoje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

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754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!
753 QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?
KAIFITILE: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?
Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kinegota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft,
[793] they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat, together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?
KAIFITILE: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?
688 KAIFITILE: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening,
[783] the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Amapyepo kukoti mikhakhi.* The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

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(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first.

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abatite*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mawele*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*mawele*) the word "black" (*atite*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mawele* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

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their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1938, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*amafumu*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[1] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwe*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sort to the District Council.[2] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwasanau (186) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[1] Five in the populous plain, Nsalala (Mo'Ngonde).

[2] *cf.* E. E. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 4 (1951).

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villages grew ever smaller and became extinct as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, owed its being to this most significant political, social and religious event. Each village had its area approximately demarcated, and each headman was ritually and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect his men and their families.

This particular system appeared satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create two chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more villages than had existed before in the old chiefdom. The two new chiefs were able easily to move apart and find sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out so neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plains. Sometimes it did work; for example, the present chiefdoms of Lazarus and Kyamo are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Mwakipesile and Mwamasegale chiefdoms stemmed from a single unit, whilst the Mwakipesile chiefdom itself today is really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognise only the senior brother's claim to chiefship and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the ancestral dichotomous arrangement persisted so that the resultant single unit had two distinct halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen. In any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the "coming-out" of the new chief. The basic village system showed greater persistence and remained truer to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became pre-eminently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land, but the village headman was in fact the real land authority, who attended to the details of land allocation and land use within his village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A villager said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom, or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without motion or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate it to others; both headmen and villagers would have indignantly and successfully protested had he tried, as some occasionally did. Land disputes, an uncommon feature in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headmen of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes first came before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headmen of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and if it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who even so relied and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. So delicate was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village disputes for fear of witchcraft reprisals against him by the unsuccessful party.

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plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus, mango, kapok, sesangazi and Eucalyptus). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots account to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this acute shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The accretion of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with an estate of 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 13. In those villages the two men out of 272 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some controversy amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relations of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men evince little ambition or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I warmly think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. The second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by the government for the maladministration of his office and other abuses and privilege of power, and for his use of his official authority to gravely wrong government affairs.

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The Problem of Immigrant Land-holders

Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1948, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: – Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region – Pekati), Ndali from the Ndali Highlands of Rungwe District and Kinga from the Njombe District to the east beyond the Livingstones; from northern Nyasaland have come Ndali, Lambia and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been attracted in the modern era, when local movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and untouched bushland has been available.[1]

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map, facing page 15). This contained the outstandingly empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and loss of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by most Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportions of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be at all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the chiefdom of Mwakyusa between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Ndali from the north-west, Nyasalanders and Nyakyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same chiefdom, the inhabitants of the Ikolo area consistently refuse to move although they manifestly cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is less easy and less profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often leave to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

At the moment the chiefs and headmen in these northerly areas are keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell the number of their commoners, the size of their villages and thus, directly, their own prestige and importance. Newcomers have every opportunity to be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, and many are liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers must conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headman and chief, although

1. Immigrants from Nyasaland are said to have come following the introduction of new regulations there prohibiting the cultivation of easily accessible hill areas.

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in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the economically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and obedient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Malema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of cassava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

[1] The main Kisi settlements in Kyela District are in the Ipyana area, on lowland peninsulas south of the Lake Malawi, where they number about 1,200. A further 1,000 are scattered on similar peninsulas and islands further south, along the lake shore. They are widely classed as pagans, and they do not change their name for social fields of reference when fishing.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
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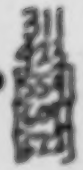
number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasize the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Karonsi's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scarcity of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to want higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealized conval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are ascribable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get



sown of such reserved land elsewhere. Such land is cultivated in the meantime on a kind of year-to-year lease by one or more of the villagers as allowed by the headman.

Even when no vacant plots exist a headman will still accept newcomers. If they are young men they must be prepared to go landless for the time being (i.e., to remain dependent on their father's fields elsewhere) until such time as land becomes vacant. If the newcomer is an older man, then the headman will try to persuade one or more of his villagers to give up portions of their holdings and he will often cede part of his own land. The newcomer is therefore often allocated small strips and plots here and there in the village arable area and he thereafter joins the land-hungry crowd seeking to expand their holdings. In one village in which I worked where land shortage was critical (Kapugi, Kyewa's chiefdom), there was not a single patch of usable land unworked; yet here the headman had, with full village approval, accepted three newcomers during the first nine months of 1955. Two of these were young men, one unmarried, and they could not expect to obtain land for some time except for a small banana plot. The third newcomer was a middle-aged man from a village some 12 miles away in another chiefdom. The headman had given him a half-acre plot out of his own paddy field and was laboriously begging pieces of land here and there from his people in order to make up a new holding of perhaps an acre. The headman himself had only about three and a half acres of arable land; he had at least one adult son who had not yet acquired an arable plot and he had other sons and brothers' sons owning only small fields. Yet he favoured this stranger, this newcomer. He was quite firm in his resolution to accept other [571] newcomers in the future and in this he believed that he was acting as a good headman should. As far as I could learn he was supported by his villagers.

This is not, by any means, an isolated or even unusual phenomenon. It is, I feel, important to bear in mind this dimension of contemporary affairs. Firstly, because it shows another way in which holdings are fragmented and dispersed; and secondly, because it demonstrates how, so far, the Nyakyusa have refused to face the situation of land shortage, and how they continue to follow traditional practices and values concerned with village prestige. These people complain of their inability to obtain sufficient arable land, but they are not yet prepared to make the mental and social adjustments which might at least partly relieve their new predicament. On the other hand, they themselves understand the need for movement and perhaps they are right in their implied insistence not to discard their cultural ideals. Their insistence on accepting newcomers and their willingness (however dimly perceived and expressed) to share their land with the landless are not discreditable attitudes, even if they are economically untenable.

Security of Tenure and Disputes over Land

As already noted, under traditional land tenure a Nyakyusa had good [541] security in his holding so long as he continued to live in the same village. The only alteration of tenure occurred at the "coming-out" ceremony of a new chief when the older men would, if required, move aside in order to give their sons' generation the best land. This did not invariably happen in any case. Fundamentally, however, security of tenure is not a matter of great importance to a people who have plenty of land, and land which is more or less of the same quality. Indeed, convenience of location in respect of one's own homestead was almost the only value land had as such. Occasionally a more dominant chief might try to seize a commoner's field [541 to allow of his own expanded cultivation; it was most unusual for him to 545] succeed, and even if he did the dispossessed villager suffered little real deprivation, for he could easily obtain another field fairly near at hand.

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today most headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young husbands likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the bilungati young-men's hamlet, attached to Mpunguti village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy strip of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the powers now at chiefs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafyale*, have been recognized and selected under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abatwe* (s. *mwe*). Some of the smaller chiefdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognized by the people, their *abanyafyale* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in Tanganyika.

The eighteens of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognized chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognized individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. See the numerical size of chiefdoms on page 6.

243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

291 935 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Wood boxes	600
Coffee	50
Groundnuts	20
Rice	1,500
Onions	20
European produce	300
Skins	1,000
Vegetables	40
Fish	350
Banana flour	300
Cassava flour	20
Finger millet	150
Tea (European produce)	110
Total ..	4,550

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

559 609 651

233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of